

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**

**May July 17, 2001  
MEETING NO. 08-01**

<b>APPLICATION:</b>	HDC01-0196
<b>DATE FILED:</b>	June 26, 2001
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Stephen Beck
<b>OWNER:</b>	John T. Bell 101 W. Jefferson Street
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	10 South Adams Street Rockville, MD 20850



**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:** This house, built c. 1875, is known as the Cottage at Quality Hill. The 2 ½ -story frame building is patterned after the Gothic Revival style cottages popular from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1870s. The house is “T”-shaped with a steeply pitched center gable front façade. The tall first story windows emphasize the vertical focus of the house. The full-width front porch has plain supports and other period decoration such as cornice brackets and ornamental gable grill work has been removed. The house faces west on South Adams Street and is one of three houses that form the streetscape on the east side of this block of South Adams. It is a contributing resource to the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District.

Front façade 10 S. Adams
-----------------------------



**PREVIOUS ACTIONS AT THIS ADDRESS:**

HD-191-87    Permission for signage; approved 1/19/88  
HD-152-86    Permission for signage; approved 4/15/86  
HD- 27-77    Construction of addition to rear lean-to of building; approved 7/19/77  
M-160-67    Zoning reclassification from R-90 to O-1; approved 4/24/67

**REQUEST:**

The Applicant requests a Certificate of Approval to build a frame two-story rear addition. The addition will square off the rear elevation.

Plans for rear additions were first introduced to the HDC on January 20, 1998 as a Courtesy Review. Updated plans are now in progress and may differ from those submitted at the 1998 review. This application is only for tentative approval to build a rear addition. The specifics of the design and materials have not been determined and final approval will be subject to submission of a complete application with final architectural drawings and site plan.

The existing building is 1,603 square feet. The total lot size is 4,512 square feet. The existing lot coverage is 22.8%. Allowable lot coverage in this Transitional Office zone is 35%.



South elevation of 10 S. Adams Street

Rear (east) elevation  
10 S. Adams Street



**STAFF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. *Historic, archeological, or architectural value and significance of the site or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area.*

This cottage is the northernmost of three adjoining houses on the east side of Block 16 on South Adams Street in an area once known as “Quality Hill”. The three houses had a common ownership in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are interesting examples of changes in architectural form and style over the period of a decade. 10 South Adams Street is the oldest of the three and typifies the popular late-Victorian Gothic-style cottage with its vertical lines and steeply pitched center gable. The house’s original scale, fenestration, and overall appearance remain intact, although it has lost some of its decorative detailing.

Precisely dating the construction of this cottage is complicated by its inclusion in the records with the commercial lots bordering Commerce Lane (now West Montgomery Avenue) which was all part of the land holdings of the Braddock-Lyddane family. The cottage is dated to the mid-1870s based on its architectural style and form, a style which passed out of favor in the 1880s.

This Gothic-style cottage is duplicated in Rockville in the 1874 Dawson Farm House and the 1872 England’s Cottage. The model for these houses can be found in many pattern books of the period.

The William Berry family lost the house in foreclosure action in 1925 but continued to rent it for several more years until the Burdette family added it to its already large holdings on both sides of Adams Street near the Burdette Store. The house then changed ownership numerous times. John Bell has owned this house since 1974 and it is one of several 19<sup>th</sup> century properties that he has adapted for use as law offices.

2. *The relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the remainder of the entire structure and to the surrounding area.*

The south and east (rear) elevations of the house are visible from West Jefferson Street. The rear of the structure is visible also from an interior parking lot and the south elevation is also visible between 10 and 12 South Adams Street. The north elevation is obscured by vegetation and faces the rear parking lot of a restaurant on West Montgomery Avenue.

According to the minutes of the 1998 courtesy review, the plans were deemed appropriate to the commercial use and were not thought to affect the streetscape. The applicant was asked to check with code on requirements for a second interior staircase and a rear exit and to observe placement of gable vents on similar period buildings before specifying vents abutting the rake board.

New plans are in progress but have not yet been received by staff. The one-story lean-to referred to in the 1998 plans has since been removed. The applicant informed staff that it is likely that the rear of the existing building (the stem of the "T") will be removed and one large rectangular addition will be attached to the rear, rather than three separate additions surrounding the back of the building as was shown in the 1998 plans. Staff recommends that no portion of the original building be demolished and that any additions should incorporate the entire original structure. In addition, staff suggests that the connecting portion of the addition be set in several inches to create a separation between the old and the new portions of the structure.

Per City code requirements, a minimum of 50% of the parking spaces provided must have direct access to interior entrance and exit driveways. (Sec. 25-411 Parking spaces and areas).

3. *The general compatibility of exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.*

At the courtesy review, windows and materials were specified to match the existing. There is no indication that this has changed, although this information was not included with the application. The existing siding is aluminum and, at the courtesy review, the HDC suggested that removal of the existing siding and restoration of the original would be preferable. This alternative may also be a sound financial alternative with the assistance of federal, state, and county tax credits.

The 1998 plans also show windows added to the original building to make it more symmetrical with the addition.

4. *To any other factors, including aesthetic factors, which the Commission deems to be pertinent.*

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends tentative approval of HDC01-0196, a concept plan to construct an addition to the rear of the property at 10 South Adams Street, subject to HDC approval of a site plan, architectural drawings and materials. This approval is also based on the following:

1. No portion of the original structure should be demolished;
2. The new portion of the building should be architecturally identified as new and separate from the old.
3. Aluminum siding should be removed and the underlying original siding should be restored on the existing structure and similar siding should be used on the addition.
4. The applicant should be aware that a use permit must be applied for and received before proceeding and all city parking requirements must be satisfied in addition to final approval from the HDC.